

**CONFIDENTIAL**

14 OCT 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch, DD/CR

ATTENTION :  DD/AB/SS

25X1A

FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR

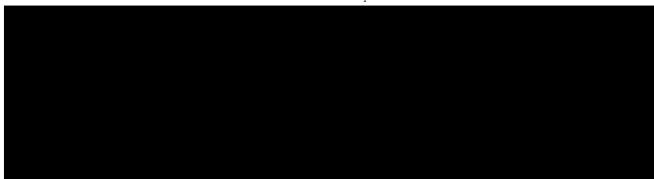
SUBJECT : Release of CIA/RR GM 60-3, The Republic  
of the Congo, 30 September 1960, Confidential,  
to Foreign Governments

25X1C

1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

#65 - #69

#90 - #92



2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DDI memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.

 25X1A

8 Attachments

DOCUMENT NO. 2  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒  
☐ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1989  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 24/8/79 REVIEWER: 035377

**CONFIDENTIAL**

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Copy No. 223

---

# GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 60-3  
30 September 1960

## *THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO*



DOCUMENT NO. 1  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: T9 & C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 24/8/79  
AUTH: MR TO-2  
REVIEWER: 035377

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

### WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

---

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**Introduction**

The establishment of the new Republic of the Congo is complicated by a notable lack of physical and cultural elements that facilitate the development of a national unity. The virtual isolation of the republic by practically continuous national borders, the virtual absence of a navigable river system, the lack of a common language, the lack of a common religion, and the lack of a common history are all factors that limit the great distances involved and the numerous interruptions to the river-traffic. Unification is further complicated by the unevenly distributed population and diverse physical environments. Mineral resources are largely concentrated in a few areas, and are so situated that the most suitable areas for their exploitation are in areas where the level of subsistence farming is still widespread. Administrative and technological training has been woefully inadequate, and the state is still in a very early stage of development.

Population

No one knows precisely how many people live in the Congo; however, an official estimate in 1978 indicated a population of some 13.5 million. The European population in 1978, before the recent large-scale exodus, totaled only 113,000, or less than 1 percent of the number of Congolese. Because of improving health conditions and a higher standard of living the Congolese birth rate has increased and the mortality rate has decreased. The population of the Congo, at the current growth rate, will double in 30 years.

The people of the Congo are unevenly scattered throughout their vast territory, a land area almost as large as western Europe. More than half of the Congo is sparsely occupied, and at least 10 percent is virtually uninhabited; on the other hand, some areas are so overcrowded that resettlement projects have been attempted.

The origin of the people of the Congo is obscure, but there is some evidence that, between the 10th and 14th centuries, tribes belonging to the east and south African linguistic family known as Bantu invaded the Congo and destroyed, repulsed, subjected, or absorbed other ethnic groups. Today, most of the Congolese may be classified as Bantu. They are a collection of kindred peoples rather than a race and are subdivided into hundreds of tribal affiliations each with its distinctive social and political structures.

The non-Bantu people of the Congo include the Nilotic tribes in the north-east, the Sudanese who pushed back or absorbed the Bantu in the north, and a few remaining pygmies scattered throughout the east and north. Within the Congo the behavior pattern of each group is distinct enough to make a visitor from another tribe feel very much like a foreigner.

Cultural heterogeneity is one of the underlying causes of the current unrest in the Congo. Tribal allegiances are deeply entrenched, and there is so little awareness of belonging to a larger political entity that no single nation-wide political party has been able to emerge. The basis of political strength is a single tribe or a coalition of tribes. For example, the *Union Congolaise* represents the Bakongo tribes; the *Punta (Parti de l'Unité Nationale)* is backed by the Bangala tribes; and the *Union Mongo* by the Mongo ethnic group. The *Union Congolaise*, one of the first Congolese political parties, was almost wiped out in the December 1999 elections.

Most of the people of the Congo speak Bantu dialects; however, with some exceptions, they are no more mutually understandable than are English and German. Four of the Bantu dialects are understood over fairly wide areas and by people of a number of tribes. Lingala has been the language of commerce along the banks of the Congo River as far inland as Stanleyville and is taught to all recruits of the Force Publique. A degraded form of Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, is spoken in the eastern Congo. Kikongo is the speech of the lower Congo and Baluba of Kasai and part of Katanga.

The basic form of settlement in the Congo is the agricultural village based on subsistence farming. A settlement may range in size from a hamlet with perhaps no more than a half-dozen families to an agglomeration with several hundred

individuals. Under traditional methods of farming the soil is quickly exhausted and the village is shifted to a new site, where the process is repeated. Eventually, as the soil recovers its productivity, the village may return to its original site. Villages dependent on hunting, fishing, and grazing also shift their locations as the available resources are depleted.

Traditionally, the primary occupations have been subsistence farming, hunting, and fishing. As recently as 1940, only 19 percent of the adult male Africans had been absorbed into the modern economy. By the end of 1971, however, the proportion had risen to 57 percent as rural villagers were attracted by the growing demand for labor in the cities and mines. This migration of the rural cityward drift has resulted in an impressive urban growth, but the preponderance of young men in the cities and women in the rural areas has created new social and economic problems. In 1945, less than 10 percent of the African population lived in the non-rural centers. By 1978, the percentage had increased to about 23 percent.

The average Congolese has had little or no formal education, seldom going beyond the primary grades. As of March 1960, there was not a Congolese in the Congo who was a doctor, lawyer, or engineer; only about 10 Congolese were university graduates, and less than 100 had completed high school. The two recently established technical universities were enrolling students who were educated in schools abroad. Most of the workers are still unskilled and able to use only the simplest of tools. Numbering in the thousands, however, is a recently urbanized group that has learned to use and maintain relatively complicated modern machinery and has attained a standard of production varying from 90 to 70 percent of that of European workers.

**Economy**

The economy of the Congo is sustained by mineral production and associated metallurgical plants and by commercial agriculture. The majority of the Congolese continue to live at a subsistence or near-subsistence level, contributing little to and drawing little upon the potential wealth of the nation. This wealth is primarily located in the mineral-producing Katanga Province, in the extreme southeast.

The mineral and metallurgical industries in 1999 employed roughly 10 percent of the wage-earning labor force, but accounted for 62 percent of the total value of all exports. In the 1994-98 period, the Congo produced 72 percent of the world's industrial diamonds, 60 percent of the cobalt (mine basis), 10 percent of the thorium, 10 percent of the uranium, 10 percent of the tin, 10 percent of the tin (mine basis), 7 percent of the copper, and significant amounts of germanium and uranium. Copper was the largest single source of foreign exchange. The bulk of these materials were exported by rail to the Portuguese ports of Lobito in Angola and Beira in Mozambique in preference for the costly internal roads. The bulk of the minerals and metals were exported to the Congo.

The wide range of climates in the Congo permits the growing of a variety of crops. The typical monotonous climate of the tropics prevails throughout the country, latitudes and altitudes cause discernible variations. Only the area within 3 or 4 degrees north and south of the equator is without some dry weather, but real dry seasons occur in the extreme north (December through February) and in the south (May through October). Annual rainfall is not high for the tropics - 50 inches in the south and 70 inches in the north. Daily maximum temperatures generally reach the low 80's, except in the mountain highlands, where the maximum is usually 60-70°F.

As of 1959 the agricultural sector of the modern economy employed almost 3 times as many workers as the mining industry and provided 58 percent of the total value of all exports — primarily palm oil, coffee, cotton, and rubber. Of these only palm oil comprises a significant share of the world's agricultural production. Under Belgian administration, the Congo had the most efficient oil-palm industry in Africa and exported over 25 percent of the world's supply. Rubber production has increased rapidly during the past 2 decades and could continue to increase if current markets for coffee are maintained and the extension of credit continues. Cotton, the third most valuable export crop, is important primarily as a "civilizing agent" through which Congolese farmers are brought to the market. Rubber and cotton production have increased rapidly in the past 2 decades, but the mining sector has increased greatly; and, although the Congolese cultivated only

17 percent of the acreage in bearing trees in 1957, they owned 50 percent of the acreage in young trees.

The majority of the Congolese, however, continue to be subsistence farmers who raise maize, plantains, maize, and rice. Except in northern Kivu Province, maize is the dominant food crop throughout the Congo. Other major food crops include plantains in Kivu and southern Kivu, bananas in southern Kivu, and rice in northern Kivu, eastern Kivu, Orientale. Despite the possession of large areas suitable for cattle raising, the Congo has proportionally fewer cattle than neighboring countries, and stock raising among the Congolese has lagged behind that of the Belgian colonies.

Transportation

Major lines of internal communication are commonly a combination of river, rail, and road transport that necessitates numerous transshipments during the course of a single journey.

The heart of the Congo is a large central basin ringed with higher ground except for the narrow gap in the west through which the Congo River reaches the sea. The Congo-Lualaba and the Congo-Kasai river systems drain an area of nearly 1.5 million square miles, but river courses are interrupted by falls and rapids that reduce their value as economical inland waterways. Even the lower Congo, the outlet for this vast river system, is interrupted by 32 cataracts with a combined drop of 870 feet between Leopoldville and Matadi.

Through transportation to coastal ports is possible only by traversing the territory of other nations. Most sizable centers of population and industry have developed along the 9,000 miles of navigable inland waterways that serve all but the extreme southern and northeastern sections of the country. The Congo-Isoala river system is the major avenue of transport to the north and east, the Congo-Kasai system to the southwest. On some waterways, seasonal fluctuations of the water level can be as much as 18 feet, and transport is impossible during the dry season. Although the Congo below Leopoldville is not navigable, Stanleyville via the Congo River and from Leopoldville to Port Francqui via the Congo and Kasai Rivers are navigable without interruption the year round.

The railroads of the Congo were constructed to link navigable sections of the river or to reach areas without navigable waterways and do not provide uninterrupted through routes. The 3,000 miles of narrow-gauge railroad are all single tracked and are characterized by steep grades, sharp curves, and numerous trestles. In the Congo River basin, the railroads are built on high ground and by low water on connecting inland waterways. Because no alternate routes exist, rerouting is impossible when interruptions occur. In addition to the direct rail route to Lobito in Angola, which carries 56 percent of the mineral exports of the Congo, the railroads connect the cities of Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, on the Indian Ocean, and with ports of the Union of South Africa. Only by transshipment over inland waterways can rail traffic be carried to the deep water ports of the Indian Ocean. The only deep water port in the Congo, on the sea at Salama, Tanganyika, on the Indian Ocean.

Highway transport occupies an important supplementary position in the economy of the country. The 86,000 miles of highways are used primarily for hauling ores and minerals to railheads or river ports and for short-distance movement of agricultural products. The Belgian Government's economic policy favored development of inland waterways and rail links rather than a system of national highways in a modern sense. Poor road foundations, narrow roads and bridges, and numerous very curvy roads limit long distance highway traffic. A few roads in the vicinity of Leopoldville, Matadi, Elizabethville, and Bakavu have paved surfaces, but most roads are dirt roads and are often impassable at times during the rainy season. Detours around obstructions are often impractical because of soft ground, jungle foliage, or rough terrain.

Air transportation has been of growing importance, particularly for Europeans, and has served to complement rather than compete with rail and water routes. Three of the airfields are capable of handling the largest of jet transport and a total of 37 localities were served by scheduled flights of DC-3's or larger aircraft. The remainder of the more than 200 air facilities are small strips used for air ambulance, charter service, and private flying. Few airfields are equipped with lights and many of the smaller ones are not usable during wet weather.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~